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Second Sunset Night Market Expands on its Success

On Friday, Aug. 30, the second Sunset Night Market took over Irving Street from 19th Avenue to 26th Avenue, more than double the space of the inaugural event last September. Upper left: Celebrity Chef Martin Yan with Angie Petitt of Sunset Mercantile. Upper right: A King Charles spaniel along for the ride. Lower left: Front-row crowd of kids reacting to the stinky tofu eating contest. Lower right: This year's crowd size estimate doubled, from 10,000 last year to 20,000 last month. The third Sunset Night Market is planned for Friday, Sept. 27 in the same location. *Photos by Kevin Kelleher and Emily Trinh.*

Fate of Upper Great Highway Debated

By Thomas K. Pendergast

The debate over the fate of the Upper Great Highway (UGH) between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard continues, with public radio station KALW recently hosting a forum on Aug. 20 at its downtown studio about Proposition K, a November ballot measure to permanently ban private motor vehicle traffic with the expectation of eventually turning it into an oceanfront park.

District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio, who put the measure on the ballot, as well as Lucas Lux, president of the Friends of Great Highway Park, were there to argue in favor of it and District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan, along with former SFPD Commander Richard Corriea, argued against it.

The proposition follows a decision by the SF Board of Supervisors to close the Great Highway extension south of Sloat to Skyline Boulevard because of severe erosion and the threat this poses to an adjacent sewage treatment plant.

"The Great Highway has lost its greatest utility as a direct connection to Daly City, so now we have to decide what's the best use of the section between Lincoln and Sloat, which doesn't have any on and off ramps for cars," Engardio said. "So, turning this section into a park is what is being proposed. The Great Highway between the Richmond District and Lincoln will remain open to cars 24/7 for access to the Sunset District, just as it always has, that's what's staying the same."

"I do not support a winner-take-all approach and that is what Proposition K is about," Chan responded. "The way that I see Prop. K is a divisive

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Adding Insult to Injury, Great Wall Hardware Burglarized After Fire

By Thomas K. Pendergast

As if a suspected arsonist torching the Great Wall Hardware store on Taraval Street were not bad enough, within a week, burglars ransacked the business twice, making it that much harder for the owner Albert Chow to recover.

The San Francisco Police Department confirmed that their Arson Task Force is now investigating the fire set in the early morning hours of Sunday, Aug. 25. Due to the fact that it is an open investigation, they are not releasing any further details at this time.

"It's arson. I have a video," Chow said. "The guy walked up. He looked pretty intent. He had the tools in his hands ready to do something. So, it wasn't random. He walked directly to the store.

"I got a good face shot. (He appeared to be) an older man, in his 50s, maybe even early 60s. He was not a young guy."

Chow said he does not recognize the man but could see that he carried what appeared to be some kind of torching device and other tools.

San Francisco Fire Department spokesperson Capt. Justin Schorr said it is too early in the investigation to officially call it arson.

"Whether or not it's determined to be set intentionally will be based on the findings and the evidence," Schorr said. "We encourage anyone who believes they have evidence to contact law enforcement or the fire department, to make sure that evidence is considered in the investigation.

"These investigations can take weeks, even months because it needs to be done thoroughly and accurately. We need to make sure that we get it right."

Chow's 81-year-old mother lived in one of the apartments above the store and was taken to a hospital emergency room for smoke inhalation treatment.

Chow said she is OK now, although they kept her overnight for observation because her blood pressure was very high.

There were also two tenants living in an upstairs apartment in the building.

"It damn near killed my mom. They almost killed my tenants," Chow said. "That's the surely despicable part.

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Sunset Music Has Been Serving Local Musicians Since 1948

By George Brown V

The familiar sign of Sunset Music perched above the blue awning at 2311 Irving St. is a beacon for musicians and music teachers alike seeking sheet music, books, instruments and supplies.

The store window displays a variety of sheet music ranging from songs for beginners to more complicated Broadway musicals and classical pieces by famous composers. The display features heartwarming music-themed gifts and trinkets, such as socks and mugs.

A soothing radio playing music welcomes customers into the store where owner Evelyn Masuda is ready to help find the exact item customers are looking for.

Owner Evelyn Masuda has been running Sunset Music since 1988. Photo by George Brown V.

Sunset Music has been a fixture in the Sunset District since it was founded by musician Jerry Thomas in 1948. While the store has changed locations a few times along Irving Street, it has now been at its current address for the past 41 years. Masuda first met Thomas when she was a 6-year-old customer at his store. She frequented Sunset Music to purchase books as a piano teacher and eventually started to help him run the shop.

"Jerry and I tried this for about nine months to see if he was comfortable leaving his baby with me," Masuda explained. When Thomas retired in 1988, Masuda took over and has been running the business ever since.

Masuda believes that the longevity of Sunset Music has been due to the loyal custom-

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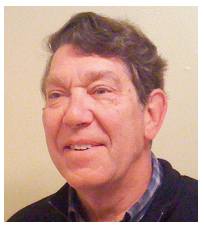

Paul Kozakiewicz

There is No Plan for UGH Park

On June 18, the last day the SF Board of Supervisors was allowed to place an initiative on the Nov. 5 ballot, District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio, District 7 Supervisor Myrna Melgar and three other supervisors sent legislation to the SF Department of Elections calling for the closure of the Upper Great Highway (UGH). It took only five supervisors to put Proposition K on the ballot.

In the Sunset District, Engardio did not discuss or disclose anything about the proposal before springing it on his constituents. (He has a monthly column published in the Sunset Beacon where he could have discussed it.)

One group that did not take kindly to being kept in the dark about such an important transportation decision is the Chinese community.

Josephine Zhao, president of the Chinese American Democratic Club, which supports keeping the UGH open for everyone, said the issue is very important for the Chinese community.

She had a message for Engardio: "You work for us, you do not work against us."

Proposition K:

• Causes needless divisiveness among westside residents where passions over the issue are boiling over, especially on social media.

• Stops any potential compromise between stakeholders as to how the UGH is shared.

• Could permanently end a pilot program whereby the roadway is open for traffic weekdays and closed for other uses on weekends.

• Diverts more than 14,000 vehicles a day, a number that has been increasing over the last four years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving traffic from the UGH to Sunset Boulevard, a high-risk injury corridor, is in direct conflict with the City's Vision Zero plan. (Before the pandemic, the SFMTA counted 23,500 vehicles a day on average using the UGH.)

• Constricts the ability of westside residents to move freely, efficiently and the most climate-friendly way.

• Ignores the fact that the City is planning increased housing density in the Richmond and Sunset districts, significantly increasing the number of people living on the west side.

• Necessitates the expense of continually removing sand from the UGH because Prop. K requires a portion of the UGH to be open and accessible to emergency vehicles.

• Determines that the portion of the UGH from Sloat to Skyline boulevards has to be closed due to "managed retreat," but that determination was made before the SF Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) voted in July to build a seawall to protect the Westside Treatment Plant. The seawall could also protect the historic use of the UGH and restore a vital connection without extensive traffic detours. (It is also a bone of contention for surfers, who say the seawall could destroy a prime surfing spot.)

Mayoral Candidates Say "No" on Prop. K

Politicians who want to keep the UGH open for all include three of the four major mayoral candidates – Daniel Lurie, Mark Farrell and Aaron Peskin, president of the SF Board of Supervisors.

Additionally voting "no" on Prop. K is District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan, who is fighting on behalf of Richmond District residents, and District 7 mayoral candidates Stephen Martin-Pinto and Matt Boschetto.

"The Upper Great Highway is an indispensable traffic artery," Boschetto said.

Also, the Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR), one of the oldest neighborhood organizations in the City, is against closing the UGH to private vehicles.

Mayor London Breed, who has been no friend to the west side, supports converting the UGH into a Great Sand Dune.

Before being elected in District 4, Engardio said he supported the current compromise whereby everyone shared the road. He abandoned that position to hatch Prop. K.

Merchants Don't Believe Claims

Those who want to close the UGH to private and commercial vehicles say it will be good for local businesses.

But the Taraval Street merchants association – People of Parkside Sunset (POPS) – Greater Geary Boulevard Merchants Association, Irving Street Merchants Association and Chinatown Merchants Association (Richmond and Sunset branches) oppose closing the UGH because it limits the ability of merchants' regular customers to get to their stores. They do not believe Prop. K does anything to bring in new customers since it only closes a highway and does not provide any planning or resources for a park.

I'm still searching for a westside merchants' organization that supports the closure of the UGH.

Public Safety at Risk by Closing UGH

There was a protest at the V.A. Hospital in the Outer Richmond on Aug. 10, with several veterans speaking out against Prop. K.

Mike Regan is a Vietnam War veteran who lives in Ingleside Terrace and has difficulty driving. He said his commute to the V.A. Hospital is about 15-20 minutes longer when the UGH is closed.

It was pointed out at the protest that the SF Fire Department's surf and cliff rescue unit is housed a block away at the firehouse at 42nd Avenue and Geary Boulevard.

Because many of the unit's rescues occur at Ft. Funston, the lives of people and pets could be at risk because of slower emergency vehicle response times.

When the UGH was initially closed on a permanent basis for the COVID-19 pandemic, the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) installed plastic poles in the intersections on Lincoln Way, to about 42nd Avenue, stopping vehicles from turning into the Outer Sunset.

Residents living within six blocks or so of the beach had to travel miles around the barricades to get home. (The SFMTA also cut off some northbound turns from Sloat Boulevard.)

Engardio, Melgar and the SFMTA have not done any of the homework needed before a radical plan to close such an important traffic artery to private vehicles is even considered, much less enacted.

Closing Great Highway Will Increase Pollution

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and, traveling at a constant speed without stopping and restarting uses less fuel and is environmentally superior.

Prop. K proponents cite SFMTA reports that alternative routes would only cost motorists an extra three minutes of travel time during rush hours, claiming the personal sacrifice is worth it for another park.

But that means drivers needlessly spending hundreds of thousands of hours a year behind the wheel.

And what about the carbon footprint that results from thousands of extra tons of hydrocarbons being released into the environment? I'll leave that up to the scientists to figure out, but I know it's consequential, especially to people living in the Central Valley.

But pollution and a warming climate are not consequential to proponents of Prop. K, where tons of extra pollution, slower emergency response times, wasted hours for westside residents needlessly sitting in traffic, the inability for customers to reach local businesses and the corruption of the public square doesn't matter. For them, the ends justifies the means.

But, lots of San Franciscans (openthegreathighway.com) are fighting to do the right thing despite facing long odds in a citywide election.

The forces pushing for the closure of the UGH claim Prop. K will create a great, world-class park. But there is no plan. Prop. K is just a road closure – an injustice forced on Sunset and Richmond district residents.

Paul Kozakiewicz is an editor and former publisher of the Sunset Beacon and Richmond Review newspapers.

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State Health and Safety Codes Prohibit Having Pets at Farmers Markets

By Linda Badger

Many San Franciscans love shopping for organic produce and artisan foods at their local farmers markets. Many San Franciscans are also notoriously fond of their dogs and like to take them everywhere, including to their local farmers markets.

Farmers markets, however, post "no pets allowed" signs to keep dogs out. In so doing, the markets are complying with specific state laws enforced by local authorities.

Dogs in farmers markets are illegal under California Health and Safety Code Section 11425.5(b)(7), which prohibits dogs, or any other live animals, unless "kept at least 20 feet (6 meters) from any … certified farmers market." Similarly, Health and Safety Code 114371(d), which sets out the requirements that certified farmers markets must follow, states that "no individual shall bring a live animal … within 20 feet of any area where food is stored or held for sale within a certified farmers market."

If a certified farmers market fails to comply with these laws, it could lose its permit to operate or face fines.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) exempts "service dogs" from this state prohibition. The term "service dog" is narrowly defined as "any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." The definition is limited to dogs and, in some cases, miniature horses.

"Emotional support dogs" that provide comfort simply by being with a person, do not qualify as service animals under the ADA, and are not allowed at the market. Under California Penal Code 365.7, anyone who knowingly misrepresents their pet as a service dog is "guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars ($1,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment."

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) is the local authority tasked with enforcing "no pet" laws in our neighborhood farmers markets. A spokesperson for the agency stated that it, "routinely inspects markets and enforces retail food facility laws," which "protects public health by preventing animal waste from contaminating food." This year, DPH reported having received no complaints, but suggested: "If you would like to report cases of non-service dogs at a certified farmers' market, please call 311."

Andy Naja-Riese is the CEO of the Agricultural Institute of Marin which manages nine Bay Area markets, including the Clement Street Market.

"Since we are a certified farmers market that is permitted by the SF Department of Environmental Health, dogs and pets are not allowed in the market unless they are service animals,

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Many pet owners ignore signs stating state laws that prohibit their dogs and other pets from farmers markets. ***Photo by Andy Fischer.***

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Real Estate

John M. Lee

Fall Real Estate Outlook

As a student of real estate my entire life, 2024 holds special interest for me as we are currently going through a market in transition. Normally in September I write about what we can expect in our fall real estate market because it marks the start of our second selling season of the year in San Francisco.

Our two best seasons are in the spring, from February to June, and then in the fall after Labor Day, from September to Thanksgiving. Our summers are normally slow because many people take vacations which means buyers, sellers and agents are out of town, thus delaying the buying or selling decisions until they get back. There are also many weekend events such as the SF Marathon and Outside Lands concert during the summer that take the focus off of real estate.

Our July median sales price for single-family homes in San Francisco is at $1,625,625, up 4.9% year over year. This number started turning positive last year. The sales volume is up about 14.6%, months of inventory is at 1.8 months, meaning that it will take almost two months to sell all the listings currently on the market, a fairly low number.

In many ways, this is still a confusing market with many economists disagreeing on where this market will go. On one side, you have the pessimist who says that our prices have gone straight up for 12 years in a row, and we have to go further down before prices will go up. With inflation of the last few years, tech companies announcing layoffs, interest rates still much higher than before, and a stock market that just survived a major correction in August, we are looking at further price declines.

On the other side, you have experts arguing that our economy is still doing well. Unemployment is down, people have adjusted from the pandemic, inflationary pressures are under control, mortgage interest rates have gone down, and the feds have signaled that they will cut the rates in September. This is an election year, so the Democrats will do whatever they can to boost the economy to increase their chances of winning in November.

Both sides have legitimate reasons for their beliefs. Nobody has said that double digit appreciation is around the corner yet.

So, this brings the question of what will happen in the fall? I think it will be more of the same as the real estate market does not stop. There will always be people who want to buy and people who want to sell. Because the prices have dropped a little from the peak, and many sellers have low mortgage rates either because they purchased the property a while ago or they refinanced it, they are reluctant to sell and thus this will keep the single-family housing listing inventory low. Prices are dependent on the supply and demand balance, so this helps to boost prices. I believe that with the anticipated interest rate decrease, the floor has been set for this next cycle.

The larger area of concern is the investment market where interest rates are still high and insurance is difficult to get; plus, the property most likely is under rent control, limiting revenue growth. Many listings are lingering on the market searching for the correct price point in today's market and I believe that there are buying opportunities in this segment of the market.

What does this mean for the consumer? The best advice is to work with a top-notch real estate professional who is on top of the market to provide you with the insights necessary to fulfill your goals in this changing marketplace.

Sunset Homes Sold in August*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
1210 48th Ave.	2	1	850	$900,000
1767 48th Ave.	2	1	1,125	1,250,000
1947 46th Ave.	3	1	1,029	1,320,000
2179 46th Ave.	2	1	1,200	1,350,000
232 Quintara St.	2	1	1,321	1,400,000
2107 34th Ave.	3	1.5	1,465	1,550,000
2526 32nd Ave.	3	3	2,095	1,570,000
1534 Seventh Ave.	3	1	1,564	1,610,000
1743 39th Ave.	3	2	1,185	1,800,000
1650 48th Ave.	3	2	2,004	1,850,000
1372 22nd Ave.	4	2.5	2,209	2,000,000
2123 29th Ave.	4	4	2,350	2,365,000

Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.

For sellers, there have been reports of properties staying on the market longer with price adjustments. With the upcoming interest rate decrease though, that should turn the market more toward your favor. There are still quite a number of buyers out there. If your property is priced and marketed correctly, you should still be able to sell at a good price. For buyers, I recommend proceeding with caution. Currently prices are high, but you are buying at a lower interest rate than last year. When the rates come down farther, you can always refinance the loan and come out further ahead. I urge buyers to consider all factors before purchasing.

For people who are looking to trade up, this market is presenting an interesting opportunity to reposition your real estate portfolio for the long term as competition for properties is less than before.

This will be an interesting fall selling season and should give us a taste of how the market will be going into 2025.

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Sunset Music Plays On

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ers that continue to frequent the store.

"It's a good neighborhood, a lovely, family-oriented neighborhood," she said. "People are used to finding the store here. I've been fortunate in that repeat customers over the years will get the next generation coming through."

Masuda, who grew up in the Sunset District, can play a variety of instruments, including the piano, violin, guitar, flute and clarinet. She taught music for about a decade before completely devoting herself to Sunset Music.

"I've always loved music, and I've always loved paper for some reason when I was a kid," Masuda said, reflecting on where her love for sheet music and instruments is rooted. "And when you put them together, it's great."

Masuda is proud that she is able to provide musicians with printed sheet music with the actual cover art rather than a generic paper with notes that is downloaded off the internet.

In addition to selling piano books and sheet music, which pile the shelves in the store all the way up to the ceiling, Masuda also offers an assortment of music-related items that make great gifts, including tote bags, cookie cutters, bookmarks, jewelry and even busts of famous composers. Music-themed pencils, erasers and bookmarks, which she refers to as "toys," are nestled among the other trinkets on the counters.

"I like ordering these things," Masuda said. "From my teaching days, I'd buy stickers and pencils for students. They're important."

Masuda's store is also home to a massive ball of rubber bands that originated in 2005. Three girls who worked at Sunset Music at the time each made her own rubber band ball, which soon chaotically rolled around the store every day. Masuda advised the three companions to combine their creations and, from 2005 to 2023, new rubber bands were gradually added to form the now 34-pound rubber band ball. This artifact is now encased in glass to protect it from air that could dry and disintegrate the rubber bands.

Masuda also offers some minor instrument repairs and provides referrals for piano tuning services. While she no longer teaches, Masuda still runs a referral service for music teachers in San Francisco.

"For example, if someone needs a piano teacher in the 94132 zip code, I could look at my list and give them some names," Masuda said.

Located on Irving Street between 24th and 25th avenues, Sunset Music has been serving the community for 76 years. ***Photo by George Brown V.***

Like a lot of small businesses, Sunset Music has faced many challenges in recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"COVID did something to brick-and-mortar places where people stayed at home and then found it easier to just click a button to buy something," Masuda said.

Sunset Music used to offer studio rentals, but when shelter-in-place happened, most teachers transferred to online music lessons and never returned to in-person instruction after the peak of the pandemic passed. Masuda continues to require face masks at Sunset Music because she is a caregiver to her 100-year-old mother.

Luckily, Sunset Music withstood the pandemic because people still wanted to get real books and needed the services her store provides.

"I'd like to hope I give a personal touch, and I can assist customers in finding their requests better than if doing it on their own," Masuda said.

Sunset Music is located at 2311 Irving St. Store hours are Tuesdays-Saturdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Learn more at sunsetmusicsf.com.

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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Nov. 5 Voting Recommendations

Separation of church and state in the United States of America, California and San Francisco could hardly be more complete. The church (or synagogue or mosque) teaches us that money isn't everything but the government, local, state and federal, tells us it is! This is an election year (Nov. 5) which means it's when a lot of politicians get free speech confused with cheap talk.

The federal presidential election offers two cheaters, one of whom did so to defeat the incumbent in 2003 for San Francisco's district attorney after he had hired her the year before as an assistant district attorney, and the other's already been convicted this year of income tax cheating and faces four more criminal and civil trials. It doesn't affect whether Harris, the Democrat, or Trump, the Republican, prevails in California because the Golden State constitutes a one-party state, and no Republicans are wanted for president or government or attorney general or other statewide public offices. For those who are so bold to ask how I'm voting, I plead guilty to eschewing either such candidate (or that "nut job" Robert F. Kennedy Jr. who has now quit and endorsed Trump) in favor of a write-in candidate – me! Therefore, I proceed to the local and state ballot measures in that order.

Proposition A is characterized as a "Schools Improvement and Safety Bond." The failing Board of Education with student enrollment approximately 50,000 (if you believe the School District which I don't) asks voters to authorize the sale of $30 million of general obligation bonds which will, with interest, cost taxpayers another major debt to repay over 30 years. I recommend a "no" vote until the School Board is comprised of commissioners with good business and scholastic sense who don't force citizens themselves to qualify ballot measures like the one last March compelling Algebra education in the eighth grade, causing the commissioners to wise up and restore Algebra to eighth graders themselves before the election at which voters strongly approved that ballot measure led by Diamond Heights resident and former USF Law School Dean John Trasvina. Moreover, we taxpayers must still pay for 2003's Proposition A ($295 million G.O. bond in June 2006's $450 million G.O. bond by June 2035, another $531 million G.O. bond by June 2035 for 2011's Proposition A and $744 million G.O bond by June 2042, emanating from 2016's Proposition A). Simultaneously, California Proposition 2 this November seeks approval of a $10 billion (!) bond to repair schools with declining enrollment statewide. Vote "no" so we don't keep paying debt service until 2047-48!

Another bond, this one for homeless SF residents, follows as Proposition B. This "beauty" bears the title "Community Health and Medical Facilities, Street Safety. Public Spaces and Shelter to Reduce Homelessness Bond" (What a mouthful!). I'll probably vote "yes" unless more prodigal facts emerge before Election Day.

Proposition C adds more bureaucrats to City Hall, an inspector-general's office. We've had a budget analyst since I was an at-large elected supervisor, elected in 1971; we also have an honest controller, a district attorney with a White Collar Crime Bureau and a city attorney to protect residents, visitors, commuters and taxpayers. Vote "no" on C.

Proposition D will reduce city and county commissioner by one-half from the current 130 to 65 and allow more mayoral flexibility. It's a voter-initiative, unlike Proposition E which creates yet another committee as a "task force" to reduce such bodies! That emanates from our stupidvisors, of course. Vote "yes" on D and "no" on E.

Proposition F is my friend Mayor London Breed's idea of reinforcing the number of cops by paying their retirement benefits (75% of salary) while keeping them on the police force five more years receiving their healthy salaries. It's an unbargained (and naughty) salary increase. Vote "no."

Proposition G is more welfare payment benefits for renters, "low income" seniors, families and disabled residents. San Francisco in the 1970s had the highest welfare payments in California until the Board of Supervisors, led by the late John Barbagelata, passed an ordinance lowering it. Here we go again, attracting more homeless. I'm voting "no."

The same gimmick to maintain police officer numbers infects Prop. H regarding firefighters. This allows them to receive their full pensions if they work another five years. It's a wrong tactic. Pity the taxpayers and vote "no" on H, which Mayor Breed surprisingly opposes! Do the same on Prop. I regarding nurses and 911 operators. We do have a shortage of registered nurses (aka "RNs"). But Prop. I would give city nurses retirement credit of three years, plus allowing so-called per diem nurses retirement benefits of three years to encourage them to accept RN positions. The former "gift" will encourage them to retire three years sooner and exacerbate such shortage and increase taxpayer obligations. It's more City Hall madness. Vote "no."

Proposition J represents another giveaway. This one would deliver a gift so the plethora of non-profits staying extant because of taxpayers and overpaying most of their staffs. My friend, the late Supervisor Barbagelata, in the 1970s wanted to reduce the number of city employees and their extravagant pensions by contracting with non-profit corporations to provide local government services. City employee unions fought such legislation which I was co-author. We were mildly successful. Now, that effort to save tax dollars has created over 100 contracts with non-profits which gouge taxpayers with huge staffs and salaries. Proposition J enhances these financial explorers, many of whom have been exposed since 2023 for misconduct. Stop Prop. J by voting "no."

Proposition K was endorsed by The SF Chronicle last month, which arouses voter rejection without my pap. The Upper Great Highway was built with money from the state gasoline tax on motor vehicles. California has the highest state gasoline tax in the U.S.A. Thousands of motor vehicles use the Great Highway Monday to Friday under a deal with the devil which limits motor vehicles to Monday to Friday during working hours, 6 a.m. until noon on Fridays. It is then closed to everyone but bicyclists and walkers until the following Monday at 6 a.m. Board of Supervisors geniuses Joel Engardio, Myrna Melgar, Dean Preston, Rafael Mandleman, Matt Dorsey (surprisingly) and Mayor Breed have endorsed this vehicle-driving taxpayer insult. Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin opposes Prop. K, as he also does the "build new housing" shibboleth trumpeted by State Sen. Scott Weiner regarding San Francisco. Richmond District Supervisor Connie Chan also opposes Prop. K. Proposition K adherents claim the Great Highway from Sloat Boulevard to Route 35 will be subjected to such a sea level increase this decade as to render it unusable. That's more City Hall pap; the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association forecasts Ocean Beach will suffer a meager 1-15 inch sea level rise by 2050. Apparently, the SFMTA chief (Jeffrey Tumlin) intends to re-design bus service for bicyclists and pedestrians only because he's another highly paid "yes man," receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to harass voters while Muni's farebox recovery ratio still hovers at less than 25%.

I pause to express my thanks to Judi A. Gorski, a retired art instructor, who lives with her husband on 48th Avenue which is afflicted by motor vehicle traffic galore whenever the Great Highway now closes. Engardio should be recalled for his disregard of constituents. I'll assist. I also endorse closure opponent Supervisor Connie Chan for re-election in the Richmond District.

Prop. L is more taxations, imposing a tax on "Transportation Network Companies" (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft and autonomous vehicles like Waymo and Cruise. The tax endures until repealed by voters. Supervisors can amend it by a two-thirds vote. I suggest strongly a "no" vote on L. I also do on Prop. M, another business tax, while 35% of business offices downtown and on Market Street remain empty. That's City Hall's way to discourage businesses from opening!

Proposition N hands out loans and pays trainees from a City Hall fund for reimbursing city employees for student loans and educational expenses up to $25,000 for cops, firefighters, sheriff's deputies, paramedics, nurses, 911 dispatchers, supervisors or coordinators. Only 51% voter approval is necessary. I'll vote against it on Nov. 5.

Finally, we get to Prop. O, an initiative declaring it official city policy to protect abortions, establish a fund to finance them from "received" money, federal, state or private contributions and restrict our 38,000 or so city officers and employees from cooperating with federal or state prosecutions on abortion cases in California. I'm pro-abortion and not a Roman Catholic and at 96 years of age unlikely to be affected by Prop. O, but I marvel at the political correctness of our elected lawmakers in our one-party City where a candidate needn't pay any attention to the Archdiocese or its members. It wasn't that way during my years on the Board of Supervisors or in the state Senate.

There's no space this month for state ballot measures or public office contests, except I reiterate my support of Mayor Breed, disdain for Harris and Trump and recommend Matt Boschetto for Supervisor in District 7, Leanna Louie for the City College governing board, Ann Sue and Lefteris Eleftheriou for Board of Education. I do endorse attorney Moe Janil for supervisor in North Beach, Telegraph Hill and Russian Hill to replace Great Highway car closure opponent and Board President Aaron Peskin.

I pilfer from this month's American Legion Magazine by explaining: "How did the tractor salesman find out his wife left him? He came home from work and found a John Deere letter."

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, SF Ethics Commission member, president of the California High Speed Rail Authority governing board and retired Superior Court judge.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stance on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of viewpoints. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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FELTON TECH SQUAD

Felton's Tech Squad is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities. Ask questions regarding how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop. Drop-in for a one-on-one session in English, Cantonese or Mandarin. Friday, Sept. 27, 1:30-3 p.m. at the Ortega Library (3223 Ortega St.). We are also seeking volunteers who speak English and/or Cantonese. For more information, call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

FLOWER PIANO

Flower Piano is set to return to the Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park Sept. 13-22, with a special opening night event on Sep. 12 – doubling the duration from last year and spanning two weekends. In the final days of summer, and for the ninth time since 2015, Flower Piano will once again transform San Francisco Botanical Garden into the City's own alfresco concert hall where everyone is invited to play and listen. Learn more at gggp.org/event/flower-piano/.

FREE EVENTS AT THE SF PUBLIC LIBRARY, SUNSET BRANCH 1305 18TH AVE., 415-355-2808, sunmgr@SFPL.org

• Tutorial: Tablet/Smartphone CLASS For Older Adults 60+. Self-Help for the Elderly's training program is ideal for those seeking to enhance their technical skills. The program focuses on hands-on training, allowing participants to become proficient in using their smartphones and tablets. Bring your device along and prepare to become an expert! Device Type: iOS & Android. Topic: YouTube. Learn how to search video in YouTube; how to skip ads (in search page, during video); how to adjust video volume, quality and speed. Friday, Sept. 20,1-2:30 p.m. Space is limited. Reservations required: 415-355-2808 (starting Sept. 6).

• Book Club: Sunset Silent Readers. Join us for a silent reading session, followed by a group discussion. Bring any book, fiction or non-fiction, and share your thoughts with us. Tuesday, Sept. 24, 4-6 p.m. Registration is recommended: 415-355-2808.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy September birthday to Mariamane Akopyan, Peg Anderson, Julien Calfayan, Cody Davis, Julie De Lorenzo, Mimi and Zozo Dermu, David G. Dixon, Wendy Durand, Gary E., Harry Fong, Philip Liborio Gangi, Kelvin Gee, Taylor Gee, Carolyn Glaser, River Hauso, David Heller, Lawrence Helman, Steven Hom, Robin Huey, David Jesue, Paula Karolak, Sue Kolb, Hailey Jade Kozakiewicz, Lillian Lippold, Chloe Lue, Odette Lue, Rachel Lue, Rowan Lue, Nicole Meldahl, Thea Mazzalai Nguyen, Kassandra Nolan, Barbara Paschke, Sarai Hernandez Pastrana, Aly Patel, Will Reese, Alexander Thurman Rowland, Danny Saiz, triplets Caroline, Daniel and Max Salvatore, Hannah Schmidt, Rick Sill, Kostya Timchenko, Mark Troianovski, Joey Villanueva, Pandora Wong and Cliff Yee. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

INNER SUNSET FREE FIX-IT FAIR

We'll try to fix anything – except electronics and relationships – for free. Yes, for free. No hidden charges, no fees, no gobbledegook. Bring your wobbly, chipped, loose, broken, frayed, splintered, torn, cracked or severed item. If we can't fix it, we'll give you twice your money back. Please bring repair supplies, if possible. 502 Irving St. at Sixth Avenue, Sunday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (last item taken in at 3 p.m.). Volunteers welcome. Call Barbara at 415-246-4748, or email barbara@barbara.com.

LINCOLN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION'S CAR SHOW

Abraham Lincoln High School Alumni Association's eighth annual car show takes place on Saturday, Sept. 28, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the school's parking lot (enter on 22nd Avenue between Quintara and Rivera streets. Free for spectators. Details for exhibitors at lincolnalumni.com/car-show.

LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

The San Francisco Long-Term Care Ombudsman program offers free, confidential support to address issues raised by residents in long-term care facilities and free training opportunities for those interested in becoming volunteer ombudsmen. For details on training or accessing support, call 415-751-9788 or email ombudsman@felton.org.

OUTER SUNSET FARMERS MARKET AND MERCANTILE

Join us every Sunday at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile where you can find fresh produce from local farmers and ranchers, enjoy delicious dishes from Outer Sunset eateries and discover unique finds from local makers and artisans. Every Sunday, find a revolving series of live performers, engaging activities and exhibitions at the ArtShip and fun zone! Our farmers market accepts WIC, EBT and Market Match. 37th Avenue at Ortega Street, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Go to sunsetmercantilesf.com or call 415-465-2475 for more details.

'PHOTOS OF THE MONTH' ONLINE GALLERY

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs on the 15th of each month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

PIANO LESSONS

With my unique teaching method, I will show you how to find every chord on the keyboard – major, minor, sharp and flat – in the first lesson. Then I'll show you how to start playing songs at your very first lesson. No need to be able to read music. Call Michael at 415-706-6428 to learn more.

REFUSE REFUSE CLEANUPS

Monday, Sept. 2, 8–9 a.m., Outer Sunset Morning Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/604552/.
Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2:15–3:15 p.m., Sunset Branch Library Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/645505/.
Sunday, Sept. 8, 1–3 p.m., Great Highway Park Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/448138/
Wednesday, Sept. 11, 4-5 p.m., Inner Sunset Happy Hour Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/581814/.
Saturday, Sept. 28, 10 a.m.–noon, Inner Sunset Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/464169/.

SECONDHAND SATURDAYS

Come check out Secondhand Saturdays and celebrate all things vintage, antique and secondhand. Presented by Sunset Mercantile every third Saturday of the month at Ortega Street and 37th Avenue, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Shop local from more than 50 vintage vendors, makers and artisans that are some of the Bay Area's best. Enjoy live music, family-friendly activities, food trucks, rotating monthly features and more! Visit sunsetmercantilesf.com/secondhand/ for more information.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

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Announcements: $1 per word, 20-word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. FREE: There is no charge for occasional announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,200 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (more than 20,000 views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

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Assemblymember Phil Ting

19th Avenue Project Update

If you're a westside resident like me, you've seen improvements to 19th Avenue; now the City's work on that busy thoroughfare is complete. I've been anxiously awaiting their project to get done, so that the state can begin its own plans to repave the road.

Years ago, lawmakers like me fought to fund transportation projects throughout California. We saw the need to fix our deteriorating roads and highways. Without a reliable way for people to get to work or companies to transport goods, our economy could be negatively impacted.

Our push culminated in Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act, which state lawmakers and I approved in 2017. This landmark legislation had been the first time since 1994 that the excise tax on gasoline had increased. With annual adjustments tied to the Consumer Price Index, this historic transportation investment brings in an estimated $52 billion over 10 years.

This steady, reliable funding has helped and continues to help cities, counties and public transit agencies tackle an enormous backlog of road maintenance and repairs, as well as make safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists. Senate Bill 1 is helping fuel street repairs in San Francisco, and 19th Avenue was definitely a candidate for SB-1 funds, given its condition.

Repaving had been slated to start last year, but the City's work had to be finished first before the state could proceed. When a city and the state share the responsibility for a particular road, such as 19th Avenue, which is also California Highway 1, collaboration and coordination are required when both want to make improvements.

I understand why local leaders wanted to do the underground work beneath 19th Avenue first before the state repaved it. After all, who wants to rip up a smooth, pothole-free road when aging infrastructure like water and sewer lines need to be replaced? So, the City started with the below-surface upgrades, as well as above-ground work, such as the installation of more sidewalk extensions, curb ramps, bus bulb-outs and traffic lights to make walking safer and public transit more reliable.

That project started in November 2020 and was supposed to take 27 months. Instead, it took longer. During construction, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission proposed to change the new pipeline along 19th Avenue from ductile iron to welded steel to increase pipeline pressure capacity. It can accommodate potable water and be used for emergency fire protection purposes. Changing the material, though, required a redesign and lengthened the time it took to make the new pipeline.

Then, when it was time for installation, the work coincided with the Stern Grove Music Festival. Since the City's Recreation and Park Department has jurisdiction over the venue's plaza entrance, its regulations stipulate that no construction can occur during the summer months. The rule makes sense, considering the size of the crowds going to the concerts and the safety risk the area poses when surfaces are torn up. Both the change in pipeline design and the summer blackout in road work pushed the completion date out to last November.

With the City's project done, CalTrans takes over and will complete the paving of 19th Avenue. You may have noticed a segment near Sloat Boulevard is a lot smoother now. A couple of months ago, CalTrans crews did emergency repaving work on that small stretch. The resident engineer said these recent repairs are a precursor to a broader project scheduled for 19th Avenue.

The state transportation agency will complete the design phase by this November and put the project out for bid in January. Then, the remainder of the state project will begin in the summer of 2025, repaving the north and southbound directions of 19th Avenue, from San Francisco State University to Golden Gate Park.

In the meantime, since there's a lull now, the City has started improvements to Sunset Boulevard, so that it can be used as an alternative route when the main state work on 19th Avenue is underway. When it's all said and done, CalTrans says it would take two years to complete their work.

I'm crossing my fingers, hoping they keep to their timeline of finishing mid-2027. We've all been waiting a long time for a 19th Avenue that serves everyone well.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Great Wall Hardware Fire, Burglary

Continued from page 1

"This guy can clearly see that there's a unit above or two units above."

Chow said he received no threats before his store was burned, so he has no clear idea what the motivation might be.

Great Wall Hardware was established on Taraval between 28th and 29th avenues in 1983.

Chow has become a fairly high-profile figure in the Sunset District. As president of the People of Parkside/Sunset (POPS) (a merchants and residents' association), he is frequently involved in community issues and occasionally comments on them, and the organization often takes positions on a variety of local political controversies.

Chow's latest is his public stance against Proposition K, the ballot measure coming this fall that, if passed, would ban private motor vehicle traffic permanently from the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard.

The San Francisco Chronicle reports that, on the day before the fire, Chow spoke to about 35 people at a rally on Market Street opposing Prop. K, saying the idea was not feasible, not a good idea and was not brought as a community compromise.

Although he finds the timing suspicious, he's not quite ready to connect the fire with this issue.

"I can't say," Chow said. "The guy didn't wear a shirt saying Keep the Great Highway closed."

At the time, he roughly estimated his loss from the fire at about $250,000, although he expected that his insurance would take care of the bulk of the repairs. He also expected it might take a couple of years to open up again.

But then things got even worse.

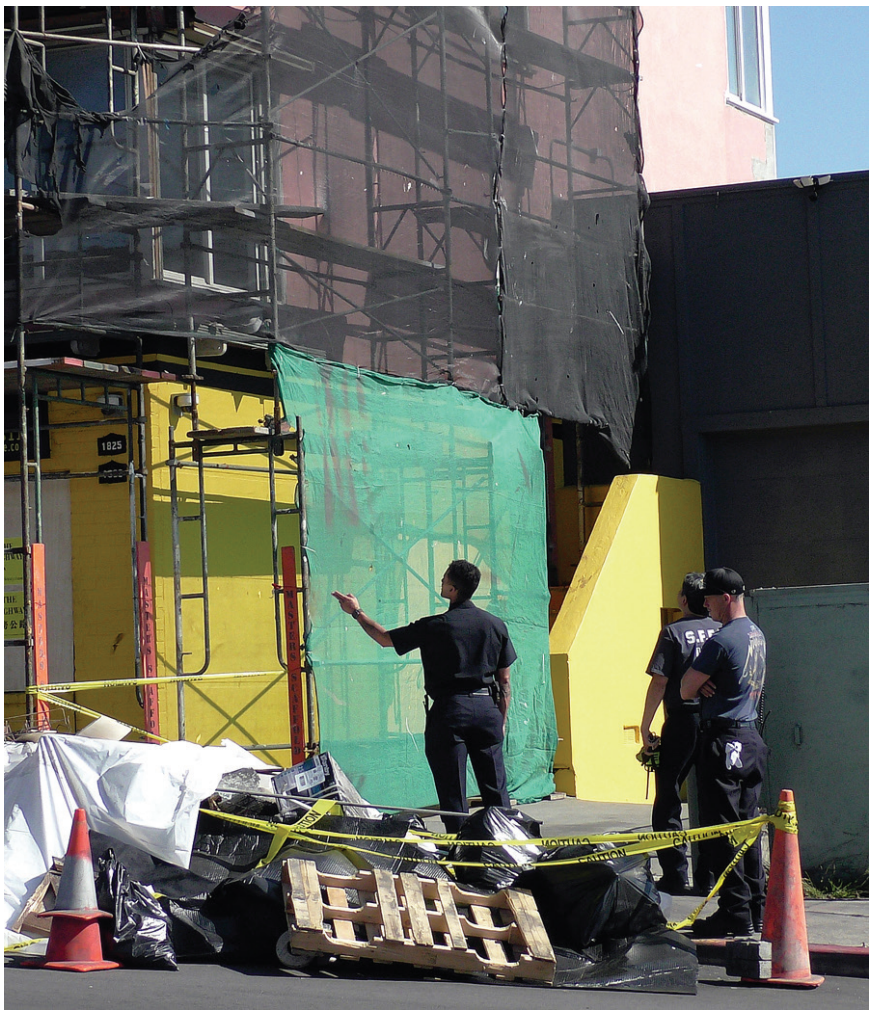
According to the Chronicle, on the following Friday at about 3 a.m. his store was burglarized resulting in a significant loss of inventory. When he returned to the shop on Saturday, he realized that his store was broken into yet again.

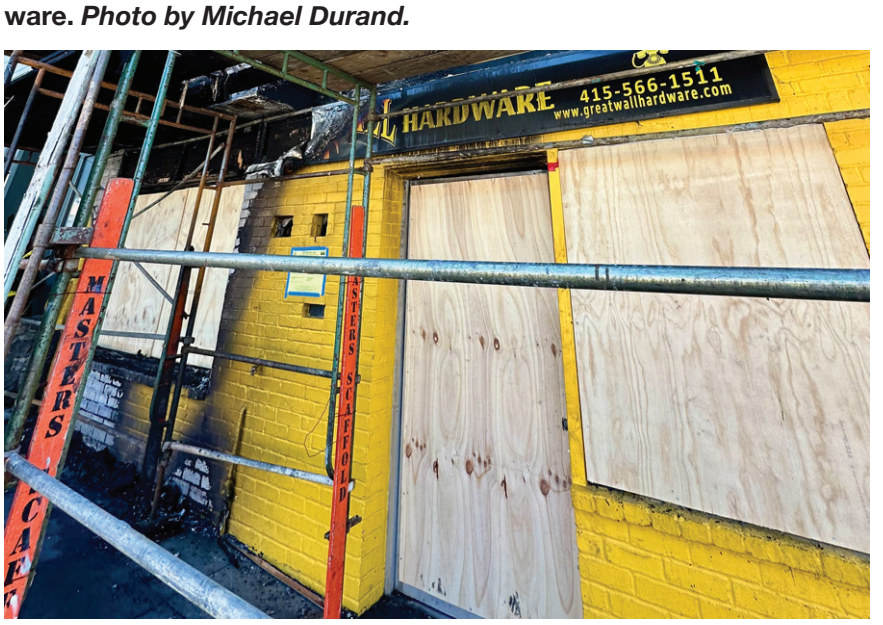
Chow told the Chronicle the burglars pried the plywood off his front door to break in on Friday. He believes they are experienced burglars and were in there for quite a while, tearing the place apart while stealing his computer, expensive inventory like power tools, a hatchet and a sledgehammer.

On Saturday he discovered that the upstairs residences had also been broken into, with his mother's passport and old credit cards missing.

The other tenants were not there because after the fire they went to stay with friends.

A GoFundMe page started for the Chow family after the fire had raised more than $46,000 in donations from more than 330 people as of Aug. 30, according to the Chronicle. The fundraiser asks for contributions to replace lost inventory, repair damage and help employees get back on their feet. The fundraising page's URL is gofundme.com/f/help-albert-chow-rebuild-legacy-family-business.





Inspectors from the San Francisco Fire Department survey damage to the three-story building on Taraval Street between 28th and 29th avenues that recently burned and was burglarized. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.* Below: Fire damage to the front of Great Wall Hardware. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

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Police Blotter

Robbery: 1400 Block of Seventh Avenue, Aug. 2, 7:35 p.m.

The victim was drying his vehicle when two suspects approached him. One of the suspects pointed a knife at him while the other brandished what looked like the handle of a gun. One of the suspects demanded the victim's property. The suspects took the victim's property and fled the scene.

Robbery: 1300 Block of 10th Avenue, Aug. 3, 8:09 p.m.

The victim was in a shared apartment garage working on a bicycle when the suspect entered the garage from the back yard armed with a metal pry bar and demanded the victim's bicycle.

After taking a bicycle and while still brandishing the pry bar, the suspect demanded the victim's property from his pockets.

The suspect fled the scene with stolen property.

The victim was able to track his stolen cell phone and Taraval units took the suspect into custody near 19th Avenue and Irving Street.

Robbery of a Commercial Building: 900 Block of Ulloa Street, Aug. 3, 7:48 p.m.

On Thursday, Aug. 1, an Estes robbery (violence against a security officer) occurred in the 200 block of West Portal Avenue. Officers determined that an unknown white male suspect had stolen merchandise and used force against a security guard attempting to stop him.

Video footage from the store showed the suspect pushing the store guard.

Two days later, the officers were on patrol and saw the suspect. The suspect was detained and arrested.

Vandalism to Property, Outstanding Warrant: 200 Block of West Portal Avenue, Aug. 4, 6:09 p.m.

The suspect was seen carrying a wrench and acting erratically. The suspect proceeded to damage five vehicles and a store window.

The suspect was located and arrested.

Robbery: 2700 Block of 39th Avenue, Aug. 4, 4:08 a.m.

The victim advertised selling his cell phone online.

Two suspects came to look at the phone. The suspects fled the scene with the phone in a vehicle.

The victim tried to get it back through the vehicle's open window. The victim was dragged.

Attempted Burglary, Possession of a Firearm: 300 Block of West Portal Avenue, Aug. 9, 3:06 a.m.

Officers were on patrol when they noticed two vehicles parked next to a business.

As the officers approached the vehicles, four or five suspects ran to and entered the vehicles, then fled the scene at a high rate of speed.

One of the vehicles ran over a curb and damaged the wheels causing them to go flat.

The suspect exited the vehicle and fled the scene, but officers were able to catch and detain three suspects.

A firearm was later located.

Other suspects fled the area. The three suspects were arrested.

Robbery: 2500 Block of Sloat Boulevard, Aug. 12, 6:49 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a robbery.

The suspect had just robbed a business with a hammer and was fleeing in a vehicle.

Officers located the suspect in the vehicle and initiated a pursuit of the vehicle.

The vehicle failed to stop and crashed into another vehicle. The suspect was detained.

Officers also learned the same suspect had robbed another business in the central police district earlier in the day.

The suspect was arrested.

Vandalism, Outstanding Warrant: 18th Avenue and Lincoln Way, Aug. 19, 6:36 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a suspect vandalizing an autonomous vehicle.

A witness observed the suspect using a metal bat to hit the vehicle and smashing the windshield.

The suspect was located and arrested.

Robbery: 1900 Block of 19th Avenue, Aug. 21, 9:22 a.m.

Four juvenile suspects walked into a store. The victim, an employee, recognized them from a prior shoplifting incident.

The suspects were angry that the victim was following them and threw merchandise at him, causing injury.

The suspects took merchandise and fled the scene.

Brandishing a Weapon: 2200 Block of the Great Highway, Aug. 24, 11:51 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of a neighbor threatening another neighbor with a crowbar. Officers detained the suspect.

After further investigation, the suspect was cited.

Battery: 14th Avenue and Quintara Street, Aug. 25, 9:55 p.m.

The suspect had boarded a Muni bus and was upset that it was not going downtown.

The suspect became irate and discharged pepper spray at the bus driver.

The suspect fled the scene.

Threats, Vandalism: 22nd Avenue and Taraval Street, Aug. 26, 11:41 a.m.

The victim, an employee from the SF Recreation and Park Department came to the SFPD Taraval Station to report juvenile suspects harassing him.

The victim, a city gardener, was working at McCoppin Park. The victim saw a group of teenagers sitting in the park and doing drugs. The victim told the suspects to leave and to pick up the trash. The suspects started cursing at the victim and threatened to have him harmed.

The victim took out his phone and began taking photos. The suspect smacked his phone causing the phone to break.

Officers arrived and detained the suspects. The suspect was later arrested and taken to the Juvenile Justice Center.

Assault: 100 Block of West Portal Avenue, Aug. 26, 2:30 p.m.

The victim told responding officers he saw the suspect earlier in the area collecting cardboard. The victim suddenly felt something striking his head. The victim saw the suspect dropping a wooden sign.

Officers located the suspect and arrested her.

Kilduff's Korner

By Paul Kilduff

"You can't please everyone, but this was the best outcome – don't you think?"

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City Hall

Supervisor Joel Engardio

Making a Case for Prop. K

Why transform a section of the Great Highway into an oceanside park? I believe it will help the environment, boost local merchants and bring people joy.

And cars will still be able to get where they need to go.

It's important to understand that Prop. K does not touch the section of the Great Highway that actually connects the Richmond and Sunset neighborhoods. Drivers will still be able to use the Great Highway to go around Golden Gate Park and reach the Sunset 24/7.

Prop. K only deals with the section south of Lincoln Way, which has no on/off ramps for car access into the Sunset.

Remember, the Great Highway south of Sloat Boulevard is already legislated to close. We are losing the direct connection to Daly City. Now we have to decide what's the best use of the section between Lincoln and Sloat.

There has been a lot of misinformation flying around, so let's talk about the facts.

What Are the Travel Patterns on the Great Highway?

A County Transportation Authority report says 64% of Great Highway usage is travel from the Richmond District to the peninsula, bypassing the Sunset District and San Francisco. But the road south of Sloat is already legislated to close due to extreme coastal erosion. With the greatest utility of the Great Highway gone, drivers will be forced to turn left at Sloat and detour inland to the Peninsula. Prop. K would have drivers turn left at Lincoln instead, using Sunset Boulevard for points south. A study by SFMTA says the time difference on this route is three extra minutes from the Richmond to Daly City.

Only 5% of drivers use the Great Highway as a connection between the Richmond and Sunset districts. The section that connects the two neighborhoods, west of Golden Gate Park, is not under consideration for closure. It will remain open to cars 24/7.

Can Lincoln Way and Sunset Boulevard Accommodate More Cars?

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) data show Great Highway traffic is down nearly 40% pre-pandemic. Traffic is down 30% on Sunset Boulevard, which has capacity to absorb additional traffic.

We know this because Sunset Boulevard is already handling the additional traffic when the Great Highway is unexpectedly closed due to sand build-up – which happens up to 65 days a year.

Do we want to maintain an unpredictable route that forces drivers to turn left at Sloat Boulevard, or do we want a more predictable route by making a left turn at Lincoln Way? If we commit to making a left turn at Lincoln, we have the opportunity to create a coastal park and implement traffic flow improvements to get drivers to the same place with only a few minutes difference.

What Will a Park Look Like?

In the short term, the ballot measure will let the City start the planning process to close the road between Lincoln and Sloat to allow for a full-time coastal park promenade. It will look like what it already does on the weekends when the road is closed to traffic. This is already a success with 9,400 people on average visiting each weekend, making the promenade San Francisco's third most popular park. Data show that 4,000 people visit on Saturdays, 4,000 on Sundays, and 1,400 on Friday afternoons.

Long term, everyone has the opportunity to dream about the potential of a coastal park. The ballot measure purposefully doesn't commit to any one vision for a park, which allows for more community input on what the park can eventually become.

What About Funding?

If the ballot measure passes, there will be short- and long-term funding. Initially, city departments would continue to fund park maintenance and sand clearing. The Recreation and Park Department could install low-cost amenities, like benches. Eventually, there would be a public process for park design and capital improvements. State and federal grants, a future park bond and public/private partnerships like a park conservancy could provide funds. But we can't begin that process until the voters decide how to use this space.

The city controller recently issued a memo that says the closure of the Upper Great Highway from Lincoln to Sloat will save millions of dollars by reducing the need for sand removal and traffic-related capital improvements – namely the traffic signals that are past their life span. They are rusted out and need replacing.

These savings can be reinvested in the new park and pay for traffic flow improvements.

Coastal Protections

If the Upper Great Highway becomes a park, the area would be protected by the state Coastal Commission. That means there will not be housing development on the Upper Great Highway or the streets adjacent to it. The City Charter also protects parkland from being used for non-recreational purposes without a vote of the people – another safeguard against any housing development on the Upper Great Highway.

The planning department is proposing new zoning heights throughout the city, but the Lower Great Highway and 48th Avenue are not under consideration for rezoning. The heights on those streets will remain at their current 40 feet. One exception is a state law that allows for three additional stories if the housing is 100% affordable. That means we will not see a wall of towers and we will not turn the Outer Sunset into Miami Beach.

Will We Lose an Emergency Evacuation Route?

San Francisco's Department of Emergency Management issued a statement that the Great Highway is not a designated emergency evacuation route.

Why Isn't a Part-Time Park Option on the Ballot?

A part-time park/highway option is not sustainable. It's difficult to create lasting park infrastructure when the weekend park has to convert back to a road every Monday morning.

An option to create a hybrid half park/half road between Lincoln and Sloat was studied during the decision to close the Great Highway south of Sloat. This option would create one lane of traffic in each direction, which would not offer the convenience drivers desire. It would also create hazards for the people crossing traffic to use the park.

The hybrid option was also prohibitively expensive because it would require massive infrastructure upgrades to current codes, including a physical separation between the two lanes of traffic.

Dedicating half of the area to a full-time park and the other half to a full-time road would cost the most while providing the least desirable experience for both drivers and park goers.

A hybrid park/highway would still have all the expenses of maintaining the road for cars, even when the road has far less utility with everything already set to close south of Sloat. For example, the signal lights on the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln and Sloat have reached the end of their lifespan. They are rusted out and need replacement – a cost of nearly $5 million that could be used for something else.

What Happens if Prop. K Fails or Passes?

If Prop. K fails in November, the weekend pilot closure will continue through December 2025. Anything beyond then would require separate action by the Board of Supervisors or a ballot initiative in 2026.

If Prop. K wins, the current weekend pilot will continue as it is. There will be a long and public process about the how/what/when of a transition to a full-time park. It won't happen overnight. It could take a year or longer of status quo. It will still require state Coastal Commission approval.

What Is the Political Reality?

This issue has been in the public debate for more than three years.

There was a ballot measure in 2022 called Prop. I that would have opened the Upper Great Highway to cars 24/7. I opposed Prop. I because it would have taken the weekend closure away. I supported the weekend closure. I also talked about the pending closure of the highway South of Sloat due to coastal erosion and how it would create the opportunity for a permanent oceanside park between Lincoln and Sloat. This language was even on my campaign website in 2022.

A lot has changed since the campaign two years ago. Yes, the compromise was good.

But voters overwhelmingly rejected Prop. I in November 2022. It failed 65% to 35% citywide and it failed 53% to 47% in the Sunset. Then, in December 2022, the Board of Supervisors voted 9-2 to refuse changing the Friday hours to include the evening commute.

In the past year, advocates wanting to open the Upper Great Highway to cars failed three attempts to appeal the closure. The most recent failed appeal was at the California Coastal Commission in May 2024. That month, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to close the Great Highway south of Sloat. The highway will never again be a direct connection to Daly City and Interstate 280.

All of these developments since 2022 have changed everything. We must be honest about the political reality. A majority of the members of the Board of Supervisors currently supports closing the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln and Sloat.

There won't be another election until June 2026. By then, the Board of Supervisors will have already decided the future of the Great Highway. That's why I believe we must let voters have a say this November.

What to do with the Upper Great Highway is a policy issue that reasonable people disagree on. I believe voters should get to hear the facts and make their own decision. Every voter deserves to have their voice heard.

This is a once-in-a-century opportunity to bring a renaissance to San Francisco and the Sunset District.

Think of the future generations who will get better access to the coast and a gathering place for exercise, art, music and culture. Imagine how small businesses can benefit if the Sunset is home to an iconic park every tourist wants to visit. Two streetcar lines offer a direct ride to the beach. There will be a tremendous spillover effect for our businesses.

We can have all this benefit while also making traffic flow improvements to ensure everyone can get where they need to go.

Please read my full blog post for more information: engardio.com/blog/great-highway-future.

Joel Engardio is the District 4 representative on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He can be reached at engardio.com/contact.

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How Bear Flag Bakery Owner Found the Secret to Making Sourdough in the Sunset

By Bailey Zitko

Last month, Greg Harmon spent his Sunday selling his sourdough at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and his night watching his son perform at Outside Lands with the band TV Girl.

Owner of Bear Flag Bakery and father to Wyatt Harmon, Harmon redefined his career in his 60s and began his mission in achieving the original San Francisco style sourdough.

The local baker's morning looks different than most.

"I went and got water this morning – 30 gallons of water."

He starts his days early, whether that be a three-mile run through the hills of Marin or gathering water from local streams around the Bay Area a couple times a month; following his morning ritual is typically a 10-hour work day in the kitchen.

Harmon's dedication in sourcing fresh, local water for his bread is not the only thing that sets him apart.

His Sunday looked different on Aug. 11 when he attended Outside Lands to watch his son Wyatt Harmon perform.

Although Harmon has a music palette ranging from classical to folk, he says it was his wife being a music teacher and signing their son up for piano lessons from an early age that led Wyatt to music.

After ending his career in market research at 63, Harmon returned back to one of his first passions – baking. It wasn't until his bread started to grow in popularity that he began to fulfill a dream his younger self never saw viable as a profession.

This new beginning did not come without trial, error or curiosity though.

"It took me about six months to make what I'm making right now," Harmon said as he carved a triskelion – a traditional Irish design – into his dough before baking it.

What brought this journey into fruition was his curiosity around original San Francisco-style sourdough and what differentiated it from the sourdough we eat today.

He experimented with different types of wheat and ingredients, reaching out to local farms like Vacaville's Soul Food Farms for eggs and a farm near San Gregorio Beach growing Sonora Wheat.

It was not until a Washington State University's (WSU) Bread Lab analysis helped Harmon answer his lingering question.

The WSU studies found fresh water was the key ingredient to what made San Francisco sourdough so special.

This redirected Harmon into a two-year mission to find fresh and potable water in the City.

Finding potable water within San Francisco would be a challenging task but something Harmon knew was doable.

An SF Eater article from 2022 found that ever since 1913, the original taste of San Francisco sourdough became extinct due to the Sierra-source water in Hetch Hetchy becoming the primary source of water for San Franciscans, and groundwater/wells were no longer available for use.

Working as an insurance inspector, Harmon came across Albion Castle; what was titled as brewery was actu-

Continued on page 12

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Not long ago, it was easy to forget that San Francisco was surrounded on three sides by water. Much of the coast and Bay were walled off by a double-decker freeway, a highway, an Army post and industrial sites.

Our City has come a long way. San Franciscans today can enjoy the Embarcadero promenade, restored marshes and bayside parks like Crissy Field and Crane Cove.

Until now, the west side has been left behind in that progress. Instead, our oceanfront continues to be dominated by a four-lane highway. That's finally starting to change.

Earlier this year, the Board of Supervisors decided to implement the decade-old plan to close the Great Highway Extension south of Sloat, which has been actively crumbling into the sea, to protect our sewage system against climate change and sea-level rise. Vehicle traffic will be rerouted inland, with plans for new traffic lights to smooth the way.

With the utility of the Great Highway as a north/south commuter road already changing, what do westsiders have to give up to create a beautiful oceanfront park? Fortunately, very little.

After the extension closure, drivers will need to turn inland at Sloat. If drivers are willing to turn earlier, at Lincoln, we'll have space for two miles of new parkland for joy, community and Pacific Ocean bliss. Yes, we'll need to make major traffic improvements at key intersections – new street designs, signal lights, and turn lanes – to help everyone get where they need to go.

Conversely, converting a portion of the road to a park takes almost no work. Simply closing the gates to cars will actually save the city money. The city controller's office estimates that a full-time park saves nearly $5 million in maintenance fees.

That is a compromise everyone can love: Those driving across the Sunset get traffic improvements for a smoother route, and we will finally have access to an oceanfront park that's accessible for all. People will look back on this time and wonder why it took so long. We have only one coast. So what are we waiting for?

Jane Lew and Heidi Moseson
residents of the Richmond and Sunset districts.

Editor:

In answer to the article of July 17 in the SF Examiner by Adam Shanks, "Is SF affordable housing now as easy as 1234 Great Highway?" I would like to say that it is not easy, for three reasons:

1. To house hundreds of senior citizens at the most dangerous place of a Tsunami Evacuation Zone is an unsound and irresponsible idea. It could be reasonable if they were housed in one- or two-level buildings, with a car and an able driver ready to take them away from the beach, but inside a mid-size building of seven-stories, the logistics of elevators, stairs, prompt help and transportation make the proposition a script for a horror movie, or at least, with news spreading through the world, the laughing stock of American housing policies.

2. To deface an area of outstanding natural beauty, such as this western coastal line of San Francisco that receives global tourism which brings needed revenue to our City, is also an unsound and irresponsible idea. Tourism is one the three main industries we have alongside banking and insurance. Tourists like cities that make sense, with high-rises in downtown, mid-size buildings in mid-town and low-rise buildings in residential neighborhoods. The Sunset District has the privilege of being on a very long and gentle topographic incline to the ocean which gives this residential area its natural beauty. A visitor who looks at our City from a high viewing point, easily spots a building that doesn't belong because it is too tall for the location.

3. To think that affordable and transitional housing issues are separate from banking policies, interest rates and economic practices is utterly naive, as is ignoring the fact that real estate developers will always seduce political partnerships for their own profit, no matter how mindless and irresponsible, such as this idea. The issue is, in fact, much bigger and complex, involving poverty, mental health care, rehabilitation and social work programs.

Shanks's article makes light of what are serious matters for the future of San Francisco and may even mislead the public into thinking that this is a "done deal" when it is not. There are neighborhood and citywide renters, merchants, homeowners, taxpayers from all walks, the arts, education, construction, healthcare, and IT, organizing to bring, as it were, water to this drought of intelligent, imaginative and caring ideas.

With only a little study, imagination and effort, our public officials can find sensible alternatives. In fact, we could even take a clue from the brilliant architectural studio, Practice for Architecture and Urbanization in New York City, which has used available technology to find and present for its city suitable sites for a million New Yorkers in keeping with existing neighborhood character (low heights in residential areas, higher in mid and downtown areas; preservation of historic areas). (nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/30/opinion/new-york-housing-solution.html?unlocked_article_code=1.800.Kk3Z.2bMyR34Xif-W0&smid=url-share.)

Come on, San Francisco, let's value what we've got and do the same!

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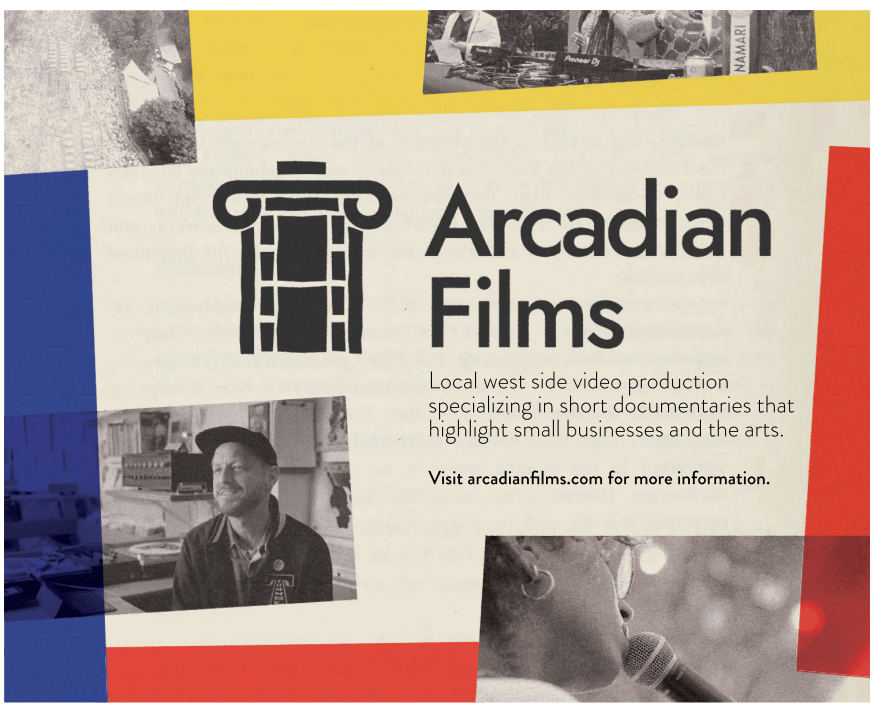
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After Five Years of Disruptions, L-Taraval Improvement Project Nears Completion

By John Ferrannini

Taraval Street looking west from 28th Avenue on Sept. 1. The still-to-be-completed boarding island in front of the post office was built at a location where Muni service was previously discontinued. "The location is on a hill, so placing the boarding island there will make it easier for seniors and people with disabilities to access the post office," an SFMTA spokesperson said. "Passengers of all abilities will be able to access the boarding island as a stop." *Photo by Michael Durand.*

The L-Taraval Improvement Project is expected to be finished this fall with the return of rail service and a celebration, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) spokesperson Michael Roccaforte said.

The L-Taraval streetcar has been on hold since 2019. The entire street had to be dug up piece by piece. Bus service replaced the streetcars.

Roccaforte said the exact dates of the return of service and the celebration have not been released yet.

"Our crews are making excellent progress on the final phase of the L-Taraval Improvement Project and have completed the special trackwork near 46th Avenue that was approved under the recent contract modification, and we've also completed repaving the street," he said. "This means all the most disruptive elements of this project and its construction are behind us. All the utility work to replace water and sewer lines is complete."

Roccaforte said all track work is now complete (he said special trackwork at Taraval and 46th Avenue was completed June 4, "ahead of schedule") and the focus now is "installing new traffic signals and adding safety rails and beautiful ceramic mosaics to boarding islands."

"Soon we'll move on to the finishing touches: landscaping elements to further beautify Taraval Street and some final safety features before beginning train testing," he said. "The L-Taraval project remains on schedule to be completed this fall and deliver a safer and more beautiful Taraval for all, with faster Muni, and reliable water and sewer service for decades to come. Construction is always disruptive, especially when utility work is involved, so we want to share the good news: the worst of it is behind us, and the best is still to come."

On Aug. 27, Roccaforte said the traffic signals were now complete at Taraval and 17th, 18th and 22nd avenues.

"The landscaping is the last thing to be finished up and is in progress," he said.

A passenger island was built at Taraval and 28th, even though that stop was previously discontinued.

"The boarding island at Taraval and 28th was built at that location to stop in front of the post office," Roccaforte said. "The location is on a hill, so placing the boarding island there will make it easier for seniors and people with disabilities to access the post office. Passengers of all abilities will be able to access the boarding island as a stop."

Asked why there's only a ramp in the outbound direction, Roccaforte said there is another island in the inbound direction at 30th and Taraval.

"The boarding islands are at different locations on the street because of limited width available and the need to accommodate emergency vehicles and private vehicles that need space to turn onto Taraval or access businesses or driveways," he said.

The project was broken into two phases. The first section, from near the San Francisco Zoo to Sunset Boulevard, began in September 2019 and was completed in July 2021 on schedule and within budget, according to the project's website. The second phase of the project replaced tracks and infrastructure between Sunset Boulevard and West Portal. The total cost of the project is $90 million, according to SFMTA.

According to Roccaforte, the project – between Sunset Boulevard and West Portal – cost $57 million in total. Of that, $4.7 million was budgeted for the track replacement at the 46th Avenue and Taraval curve, which he stated "would have needed to be replaced eventually so we are taking proactive measures to replace them while rail service is still shut down on the L."

The track from there to the San Francisco Zoo was not replaced as the "planning phase found the tracks to be in good condition," he said.

Many merchants in the Taraval corridor wish it had not taken so long but are happy the project is nearing an end.

Eduardo Capili of Taraval Tailors said "everybody got tired" of the work.

"Most people lost some business – no parking – so people would go somewhere else, even myself," Capili said. "When my customers were on the way, they'd go somewhere else because they couldn't find parking."

Nonetheless, Capili conceded that the situation improved because the City gave relief funds to businesses, including his own.

Unspent funds totaling $1 million from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in San Francisco last year were used to reimburse Taraval businesses for lost profits.

"Ripping up the street has been a major disruption and a business killer," said District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio in a news release. "Many merchants have reported huge losses in sales. What's the point of brand-new train tracks and boarding islands serving a corridor without any businesses?"

"When the construction is complete, it will benefit Taraval and its small businesses for the next 100 years. But we can't give up on today's merchants. We need them to be around when the train comes back. That's why these relief funds are so important."

Bear Flag Bread

Continued from page 11

ally a disguise for a small fort built for union soldiers to hide out in during the civil war.

What he discovered was about 500,000 gallons of "potable fresh water from the San Francisco aquafirm" hiding in the hills of the property.

After getting permission to use some of the water, Harmon was able to create the closest thing he could to the original 19th-century San Francisco sourdough.

"It was the best bread I ever made," Harmon says. "I can say that I have made actual OG sourdough."

Today, Harmon's sourdough still takes inspiration from the original 19th century Gold Rush with his key ingredient, sourcing his water out of Marin and other Northern California springs.

A customer's comment, served as a testament to all of Harmon's work and research.

"I'm back at my grandmother's house in 1952, this is the bread I ate," they said.

Currently, the local baker sells his bread to restaurants and farmers markets.

For Harmon, the future is bright, he plans to expand his bread sales at his mentor Chef Alfred's restaurant opening up later this year. Ultimately, he hopes to keep spreading Bear Flag Bakery's name.

In Harmon's own words, "More bread, more adventure. Nice."

Learn more at bearflagbakery.com.

Greg Harmon at his booth at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market selling his homemade sourdough bread made with potable fresh water from a San Francisco aquifer. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

'Then and Now': Irving Street Between Seventh and Eighth Avenues

Left: This 1970s view looking southeast across Irving Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues shows the classic green N-Judah streetcar, West Coast Pharmacy, The Wishing Well, Compton's, The Embers Cocktails, two liquor stores across the street from each other and construction at UCSF Medical Center in the background. *Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.* Right: It is hard to see the classic shoe-shaped sign on the right, now partially obscured by a light pole. The tall green building on the southeast corner of Seventh Avenue blocks the view of most of UCSF Medical Center. The picture was taken on Sept. 1, 2024. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

No Pets Allowed

Continued from page 3

Naja-Riese said. "We are required to have signage alerting shoppers about this law, so we post signs at market entrances and information on our website explaining the state Health and Safety Code and ask patrons with pets to exit the market. It's our shared responsibility to follow health and safety codes and keep the farmers market in good standing with SF Dept. of Environmental Health. While we love our pets and many of us in farmers market management are dog owners, unless they are a service animal, dogs aren't allowed in the market."

Fulfilling their obligation to enforce no-dog laws can be a difficult task for market managers. Many dog owners simply ignore the signs and can become combative when asked politely to take their dogs to the sidewalk. Others simply do not think the law should apply to friendly and well-behaved dogs, such as theirs. Some incorrectly claim their pets are "service animals." One manager commented that when she asks dog owners to move their pets to the sidewalk, she moves on as quickly as possible to avoid an often-unfriendly confrontation.

The California laws relating to dogs in farmers markets have existed since at least the 1990s and reflect similar prohibitions against live animals in food establishments published in the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) "Model Food Code." The FDA offers these model codes as examples to states and localities responsible for creating their own health and safety regulations, reviewing them every four years to ensure that they represent the best available food safety science.

The model codes prohibit pets from food establishments based on the risk of food contamination: "Animals carry disease-causing organisms and can transmit pathogens to humans through direct and/or indirect contamination of food and food-contact surfaces. Animals shed hair continuously and may deposit liquid or fecal waste, creating the need for vigilance and more frequent and rigorous cleaning efforts."

Dogs present other safety risks, especially to small children who are more susceptible to being bitten or jumped on in crowded markets.

Some states, like Oregon, do not have mandatory health and safety codes that specifically regulate certified farmers markets. Unlike California, Oregon only suggests certain guidelines to farmers markets, including, "Vendor animals must be kept a minimum of 20 feet from any food handling, display or storage. Customer animals are allowed, but it is recommended that markets require that animals be kept on leashes."

In states such as Oregon, individual farmers markets or local authorities have set the rules regarding dogs in markets. Some have taken creative approaches to consider the interests of pet owners as well as those who are uncomfortable with dogs in markets. For example, the Hollywood District in Portland allows dogs only between the hours of 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Visitors who do not wish to share the market with dogs can shop outside of these hours. Other districts have designated some farmers markets as pet-friendly and disallowed dogs from larger, more crowded farmers markets. Ironically, the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., operates a farmers market on the National Mall where, contrary to the FDA's guidance, "pets are welcome," if leashed and friendly towards people and other dogs.

While California law prohibits non-service dogs in certified farmers markets, Angie Petitt, founder of the Sunset Mercantile/Outer Sunset Farmer's Market and Mercantile, has worked hard to promote pet-friendly events that do not run afoul of the health codes.

"We are big fans of dogs and the dog culture in San Francisco. While dogs

One of California's health codes dictates that "no individual shall bring a live animal … within 20 feet of any area where food is stored or held for sale within a certified farmers market." *Photo by Michael Durand.*

are welcome at our many other outdoor events – we have even hosted rescues and are having a dog days-themed Inner Sunset Flea Market this month complete with a dog parade – we do ask that attendees walk their dogs on the sidewalk or our beautiful neighboring greenway during the weekly Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile to comply with city regulations."

Over the years, California law has loosened up somewhat regarding pets in outdoor food establishments. In 2014, then-Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation that revised California's law to allow dogs, under certain circumstances, in outdoor patios of restaurants. The FDA, acknowledging the growing number of pet owners, also revised its 2022 Model Food Codes to allow dogs in some outdoor dining areas.

Unfortunately, pet prohibitions in food establishments have resulted in yet another divisive issue between neighbors. Dog owners, who do not want to leave their pets home alone, turn a blind eye to dogs marking their territories on produce stands, reacting to other dogs or frightening children. People – many dog owners included – who follow the law resent those who disregard it. All this creates stress in one of our most healthy, peaceful weekend activities.

Looking at the laws and regulations followed in other states, there appears to be some room for compromise. Dog owners who want a change could request that their representatives in the California legislature take a new look at the science justifying the animal prohibition in the Health and Safety Codes. The public could also ask the FDA to revisit the issue in its upcoming 2026 Model Food Code. In the meantime, experts say complying with the law supports and protects our neighborhood farmers markets.

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'Should I Stay, or Should I Go?': The Story of a Local Healer's Personal Journey

By VaNessa VerLee

If you strolled by Java Beach Café in the Sunset District near Ocean Beach this summer, you might have encountered Krystle Pizzuti – an energetic woman adorned in a straw hat and colorful attire. At her table, carefully arranged with stunning crystals, gems, and rocks, Pizzuti offered both stones and their stories to curious visitors.

By the invitation of Pat McGuire, Java Beach's owner, whose "energy is seismic," Pizzuti, a nurse by training and healer by heart, is navigating a transformative journey while doing her best to stay rooted in San Francisco.

Pizzuti lives with her husband, Joe Garrido – a maker, DJ, yoga teacher and healer – in a sunlit apartment at 31st Avenue and Fulton Street, her third home in the Richmond District. For the past two decades, she worked as a registered nurse. While she cherished the role for many years, the demands eventually took a toll on her spirit.

Raised by a single mother on Long Island, New York, and significantly older than her three younger siblings, Pizzuti naturally gravitated toward caregiving. This instinct led her to nursing and an affinity for plants, which she intuitively decorated with gems and crystals. What began as an aesthetic choice revealed itself as something more profound when she noticed the plants adorned with stones thrived better than others. This observation sparked her interest in the healing properties of crystals.

"The nurse-patient relationship is what kept me in it," she reflected.

However, the onset of COVID-19 marked a turning point. The pandemic's shift from personal interaction to treating critically ill patients was emotionally draining.

Krystle Pizzuti is a nurse who is pursuing a path of healing with crystals. *Photos by VaNessa VerLee.*

"For two-and-a-half years, I took care of dead people," she says. This experience prompted her to reconsider her career and explore new possibilities.

A pivotal moment occurred a week later at the Alameda Flea Market when Girito spotted a family selling stunning gems. A suggestion to explore this path resonated deeply with Pizzuti.

"I was like, bing! That's it! The whole time, this is what my life has been leading to," she said.

This revelation set her on a new path aligned with her passions.

Pizzuti soon connected with the Gem and Mineral Society on Judah Street, where the older members welcomed her enthusiastic, fresh energy. The "rockhounds" there provided her with "Lapidary Journals" from the 1950s, dense with information about stones.

"I treated this path – learning about stones – as my full-time job," she said.

Her days were spent at the Richmond Library, her favorite branch because of the cavernous, open windows and huge rows of tables. She would immerse herself in the study of crystals with the same dedication she had shown to nursing since she first started learning it at the age of 16 in her vocational school in New York.

Now, Pizzuti combines her nursing expertise with her newfound passion for crystal healing. She and Girito have a vision to create a sacred space for community healing, education and creativity. The high cost of living in San Francisco has made it hard to know how to implement that vision.

"For years, I've been in this dance of 'Do I stay, or do I go?'" Pizzuti said with a pained smile. "It was so hard here for so long. But every time I go to leave, San Francisco comes in and like, no, no, no, we've got you. She scoops me up and puts me on the tee and just starts feeding me again."

Pizzuti is pursuing certification as a board-certified nurse coach, developing programs centered on balance, coherence and self-healing. Her approach integrates the scientific with the metaphysical, making crystal healing understandable and practical for a broader audience.

Although no longer aligned with her deepest purpose, Pizzuti has returned to nursing in short stints for financial stability during this transition. She embraces the challenges and is learning to navigate the pain of doing what no longer feels fulfilling but is necessary for survival.

"I'm giving myself permission to feel what I feel," she said.

Pizutti encourages people to explore the neighborhood to connect with their own relationship to stones.

Above: Krystle Pizzuti with her display outside Java Beach Cafe at Judah and La Playa streets.

"Geology is all around; you just have to open your eyes and pay attention," she said.

She recommends visiting Golden Gate Park to see outcroppings of jasper and exploring the giant stone slabs of amazonite at 47th Avenue and Taraval Street. Even the simplest rocks in your yard can offer grounding and inspiration.

In San Francisco's ever-evolving landscape, Pizzuti's dedication to her craft and community shines brightly. Her journey offers a grounded form of healing amid the City's changes.

For those interested in exploring crystal healing and Reiki, Pizzuti is building her presence on Instagram as @krystle.freq.xo and welcomes inquiries about workshops and sessions for both children and adults.

Tabita's Cafe's Romania Daza Still Makes Her Mother's Handmade Empanadas

By Klyde Java

San Francisco is home to many people who call themselves craftspeople. These individuals specialize in a variety of skills and trades. Some enjoy the idea of tuning an old beat-up automobile, while others take pleasure in sculpting pottery. But Romania Daza, owner of Tabita's Cafe, is a craftswoman in her own right. Her family history in the City stretches as far back as the mid-1960s.

A native of Chile, Daza immigrated to the United States in 1967 when she was 13 years old. She lived with her aunt in the Bernal Heights neighborhood of San Francisco and her mother, Tabita, later joined the family in 1974.

"My mother was a nurse for 20 years in my country," Daza recalled. "She was a very caring woman. She passed over ALS and I took care of her for over 10 years."

Being the namesake of the cafe, Tabita's presence still affects the 71-year-old Daza today. Despite being a maestro at baking homemade comfort food classics, the real star of the show continues to be her Chilean empanadas, a recipe originating from Tabita. Handmade and hot, Daza makes three versions of this Latin-American specialty: chicken, beef and veggie.

Every morning, Daza and her niece prepare the empanadas with meticulous attention. The dough is cut and rolled with the same tools Tabita herself used. The aged wood on the rolling pin and pastry cutter have been worn down over the years, but a quick tinkering from Daza's husband, Gabriel, keeps the utensils in usable condition.

Romania Daza displays a fresh batch of her Chilean empanadas, a special of the Taraval Street's Tabita's Cafe. *Photos by Klyde Java.*

"It's a lot of work." she said. "It takes a lot of time because you do everything from scratch. For example, to make dough, it's about an hour and half for about 42 empanadas."

The lack of machinery is both a choice and a necessity. The equipment used to make empanadas is often large and expensive. Plus, it takes away the pleasure of individually folding each pastry.

"I don't have the money. Are you kidding me? Where am I going to put it, anyway?" she joked.

Tabita's Cafe opened two-and-a-half years ago, but rising costs and constant construction on the L-Taraval streetcar line make it difficult to keep the doors open.

"Everything is so expensive. I just raised the price two days ago. They (empanadas) used to be $6.50," she said.

In spite of these business obstacles, the support of the Sunset neighborhood remains strong. On the mural on 22nd Avenue and Taraval Street, Daza is depicted with her signature dish. Her appearance highlights the neighborhood's diverse culture.

"I was very honored that they (the painters) chose me," she said.

Daza is a skilled and successful baker, but she is not getting any younger. The thought of someone taking over some day is up in the air. Occasionally, her husband or son help her with prepping ingredients, but no immediate heir has stepped up to take over Tabita's Cafe.

The absence of a successor does not seem to bother Daza.

"One of the good things is that I'm healthy," she said. "I don't take medicine. I don't suffer from any conditions. Thank goodness, I don't."

The family-oriented Daza is glad to share her artisanal abilities with the community. The satisfaction she brings to customers keeps her motivated.

"I want the entire San Francisco community to try my empanadas because that's my passion," she said.

Tabita's Cafe is located at 1101 Taraval St. Learn more at Tabita's Café on Facebook.

Interested in getting involved with your neighborhood newspaper?
To learn more about production opportunities, including writing, editing, layout, design, administrative work, social media, distribution or sales, email EditorRichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

From the Editor

Michael Durand

West Side = Best Side

One of my favorite parts of this job is going out to public events and listening to feedback from our readers. About once a month, when a new issue comes out, I set up the Sunset Beacon table at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market.

I wish our writers could hear the compliments I get. Thank you to everyone who shares a word of gratitude ofor our neighborhood newspaper. You insire us.

We have such an interesting group of creative people who submit their work.

Special thanks goes to Thomas K. Pendergast who holds the record for front-page news stories. His contributions to the quality of the papers (we also produce the Richmond Review) does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

I am so delighted to have some young writers who produce some great work, too. Recently, a new writer has contributed some very well-written stories. He has some experience writing for his school paper, and decided to take a chance with the larger neighborhood paper. He is quite impressive for being in the eighth grade!

Another writer just became a senior at Abraham Lincoln High School. She has been writing for about a year and has submitted some excellent stories. It gives me hope for the future.

Another new writer for us graduated from USF a few months ago. She was the editor of the student newspaper and I am thrilled with her interest in our neighborhood newspapers.

An intern who started working for us as a 15-year-old home-schooled student recently left for Southern California for his first years of college. His main contribution has been uploading our stories and photos to our website. He enjoys it enough to continue the task from a distance. As with all students, I emphasize that school always comes first. Thankfully, he's bright enough to handle both.

Friends of Woody

If you don't subscribe to Woody LaBounty's newsletter, I highly recommend you signing up for "San Francisco Story." Woody shares very interesting tales of our beautiful city's history. He's a great writer with a delightful sense of humor and an encyclopedic mind full of fascinating stories from our City's past.

Woody has been exceptionally generous to our papers, allowing us to share some of his fascinating work. To say thanks to the man who was one of the founders of the Western Neighborhoods Project (where we get our terrific "Then" photos for our "Then and Now" column), I bought Woody a Guinness at the fabled Plough and the Stars bar on Clement Street in the Inner Richmond. Our conversation was easy and informative. He's a delightful man, and I highly encourage you to contribute to "Woody's Beer and Coffee Fund" to keep this westside treasure happy. Thank you, Woody!

Sunset Night Market

The Sunset Beacon had a table at last year's Sunset Night Market. It was phenomenal! The turnout was almost overwhelming. I loved every minute of it.

We had a table again on Friday, Aug. 30. It was equally impressive. The planners deserve great credit for producing a spectacular evening. They responded to the crowds from 2023 and stretched the three-block party to seven blocks. It was almost as crowded! Last year's event drew a crowd of approximately 10,000 people. This year's estimate was about 20,000 people. I believe it. Everyone was in great spirits. I love seeing the diversity in our community. Beautiful. I can't wait for next month's night market. Stop by the Sunset Beacon table and say "hi" on Sept. 27.

Thank you to our readers who came by and donated to help the Sunset Beacon. We say thanks to them by giving away our very cool Sunset Beacon hats.

Phil Ting

We are approaching the end of Phil Ting's tenure as a state assemblymember and a longtime columnist for the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers. He will be termed-out soon.

Ting's column was always the first one I edited because it was always so clean and required very few alterations.

I was always impressed by the volume of work he completed and the millions of dollars he funeled back into our community. It seems to me he always had his constituents in mind when he exerted his legislative power.

A quick note to thank his very talented staff, including Nannette and Naomi, who have been delightful to work with. I wish Phil and his co-workers all the best in their new endeavors.

Great Wall Hardware

One of this issue's page-one stories details the sickening attack on a beloved part of our community, Great Wall Hardware on Taraval, between 28th and 29th avenues.

Owner Albert Chow has spent countless hours representing local merchants and residents as the president of the People of Parkside/Sunset community group. He advocates for local businesses, helps organize events (like Movies at McCoppin) and works hard at his business – both running his store and working on construction projects.

Albert said he has clear video of a person deliberately setting fire to his store. We hope the evidence leads to justice.

To make matters worse, burglars broke into his burned-out store – twice – to steal whatever they could and ransack the store and upstairs apartments. These are heartless crimes against one of our community's most altruistic leaders.

We encourage our readers to chip in to help Albert and his family during this incredibly challenging and stressful time. Here is the GoFundMe URL: gofundme.com/f/help-albert-chow-rebuild-legacy-family-business.

I'll end here by thanking Paul Kozakiewicz who created the papers and still helps edit every issue. Thank you!

Michael Durand is the editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. He can be reached at Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Ashley and Ryan.

Zoe and Dave.

Andy Forest of Seismic Watercolors, a Patreon business supporter.

Dan and Olivia.

Emily and Ashley.

Nancy.

Free Sunset Beacon hat with a $30 donation! Email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for details.

UGH Debate

Continued from page 1

approach to a land use issue. What we need to do and ought to do is to – through a legislative process, a public process – to actually have input about what do with that space."

Chan said there is already a 2021 study which includes a compromise design, with a promenade that will allow recreation, as well as a two-direction, two-lane roadway for motor vehicles.

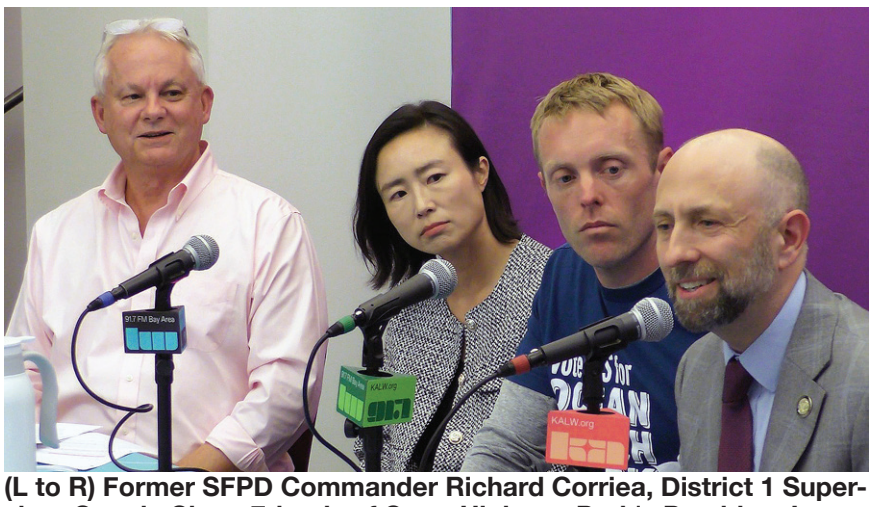
"That's something that can be done," she said. "We know that it can be done, so why not do that? Because that actually brings people together. We meet all the needs. We meet all the demands so that we don't have to divide our communities."

Lux lives in the Outer Sunset, not far from the highway.

"I live in a neighborhood that used to be full of community spaces like Fleishhacker Pool; there was a skating rink down the street from my house, there was Playland (at-the-Beach) up the road. I didn't get to experience all that. I live in a neighborhood where none of that's there," Lux said. "And when the Great Highway opened as a community space that completely changed my family's life and the lives of many of the neighbors that we know.

"And so, when we think about community impact for this space, the people in the Outer Sunset have the most to gain. We're going to live next to the City's most amazing park spaces," he said. "And when we think about the impact on our businesses, imagine all those people coming to those businesses who've never been to the Outer Sunset before.

"And then think about the flip side. What utility does the Great Highway serve for merchants? For the merchants in my neighborhood, you can't get on and off the Great Highway in my neighborhood. The only shopping that the Great Highway facilitates is people in the Outer Richmond getting to big-box stores (in Daly City)."



(L to R) Former SFPD Commander Richard Corriea, District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan, Friends of Great Highway Park's President Lucas Lux and District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio debate Proposition K at a recent event hosted by public radio station KALW. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

Corriea rejects the idea that the utility of this section of the UGH would necessarily be compromised. He said that since 2021, when the compromise plan went into effect, motor vehicle traffic has increased along that stretch of road, not decreased.

He also mentioned that the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) is looking at changing the intersection of Sloat and Skyline boulevards to make traffic flow better around the Zoo. If that happens, it will make going from the UGH via Sloat to Skyline and then into Daly City (or the reverse) easier than it is now.

Engardio admitted that this was essentially the choice voters will be making in November.

"So, that's the way it will be if Prop. K fails," Engardio said. "If Prop. K passes then we can turn left at Lincoln instead and then … go down Lincoln and take Sunset down to the same spot you would end up at had you turned left at Sloat.

"So, that's the question: By turning left at Sloat, we don't get a park. By turning left at Lincoln, we get a park. There's tremendous potential benefit to a park and we can still get where we need to go by turning left at Lincoln, then it's a win-win."

Lux agreed.

"What we're debating tonight are two routes you could take, Lincoln or Sloat, that if you put them on a map, you create a rectangle," Lux said. "This entire debate is which side of the rectangle are we driving on. The trip-time impact is minimal. So why not lean into this opportunity to create an oceanfront park for everyone and have a pretty similar commute from what we have today."

But it is the commute we have today that Chan is not happy about. And she's not sure how accurate the statistics are which give an average increase in drive time of about three minutes from the Richmond District to Daly City when the UGH is closed.

"During the pandemic my mom was sick at UCSF Parnassus. And I had to drive from the Outer Richmond to Parnassus and really use Chain-of-Lakes (Drive)," Chan said. "And even though the three minutes isn't always the case because if there's 19th Avenue construction or even as just recently with the Golden Gate Park concerts, that, if you have experience, is real traffic congestion and it was difficult for me every day to visit my mom while she was getting her pancreatic cancer treatment."

Lux countered that the statistics are reliable.

"We've had years of data. Multiple transportation agencies have studied this, and they have concluded what we all knew all along the way," he said. "The Great Highway closes all the time because of sand, so we have real-time data on what happens to all the trips that rely on the Great Highway to get from the Outer Richmond to Daly City."

Engardio says that Chan's preferred compromise would be the most expensive compared to the other options, however, Chan countered that while it's true her plan would cost $30 million to fully implement, there is no study about the cost of a fully built-out park.

"We don't actually know how much it will cost to establish the park. We don't know how much it will cost to fix the traffic lights and calming for Lincoln Way. We actually don't know a lot of things about how much it will cost," Chan said.

She then read the city controller's statement about Prop. K.

"'This ordinance cannot bind future mayors or Board of Supervisors to provide funding for this or any other purpose.' It actually also means there's no commitment about how much money is going to be spent.

"Even though it says there will be a cost savings because now you will not have to maintain the road, because you have closed the road, but if there's a park it will require maintenance, doesn't it? So, at the end of the day, cost is an issue for us."

Our community has the right to health care
We can help you enroll in Medi-Cal
sfhp.org/enrollnow
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